

## **We will Eat and Drink at the Feast of the Lamb**

The First Reading for today, taken from Genesis 18, says that *the LORD appeared to Abraham beside the large trees of Mamre when he was sitting at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day*, (v. 1). Perhaps Abraham had dozed off, or perhaps he was deep in thought about the wondrous promise he had received from God. It was good to think that within a year Sarah would present him with an infant son. At any rate, he was suddenly aware that three men (v.2) had stopped near his tent.

Hebron was on the main road that runs north and south along the ridge of the Judean hills, and occasionally there were travellers who needed food and lodging. Abraham did not realise who his visitors were until later. Although they appeared in human form, one was the Lord Himself (verse 13), and the other two were angels (19:1). The custom of the day required a traveller to stand at some distance from a nomad's tent and wait to be invited in.

Abraham greeted the three travellers humbly and courteously. He said, *“My Lord, if I have now found favour in Your sight, please do not pass Your servant by! <sup>4</sup> Please let a little water be brought! Wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree! <sup>5</sup> Let me bring some bread! Then you may refresh yourselves. After that you may go on your way, since this is why you have come to your servant,”* (v. 4-5). By our standards Abraham's invitation, and especially his hospitality may seem overdone, but perhaps our standards need adjusting. The Christian who loves his Lord will learn to look upon people not as things to be used but as creatures designed by God, loved by Him, and to be loved by us. It is not to our credit if our daily lives touch the lives of others with as little concern as two billiard balls bouncing off each other.

At this lazy hour of the day, Abraham's household was suddenly transformed into a beehive of activity. Moses describes meal preparations that must have taken several hours. Abraham instructed Sarah to take seven litres of fine flour and bake bread. There would surely be no shortage of bread at that meal! He himself ran to the herd, selected a calf that was tender and good, and ordered his servant to slaughter it and prepare it. Curds (we'd probably call it cottage cheese) and milk completed the feast he set before his guests.

“They ate.” What condescending love those two words describe! The three guests ate Sarah's fresh bread and tender veal. The scene reminds us of what Jesus did when He appeared to His doubting disciples a week after His resurrection. When those frightened men imagined they were seeing a ghost, Jesus lovingly asked for something to eat and actually ate a piece of broiled fish. He was showing them there was no barrier blocking their fellowship with God.

What a staggering thought! Abraham and Jesus' disciples were to realise, and you and I are too, that the almighty God wants to share our company as a friend. It is this down-to-earth, seeking, caring love of the Lord that melts down cold and stubborn human hearts and wins them over to Himself. We long for fellowship like that which took place under the great tree at Hebron. And God promises that we can look forward to an intimate fellowship with Him when we eat and drink at the feast of the Lamb.